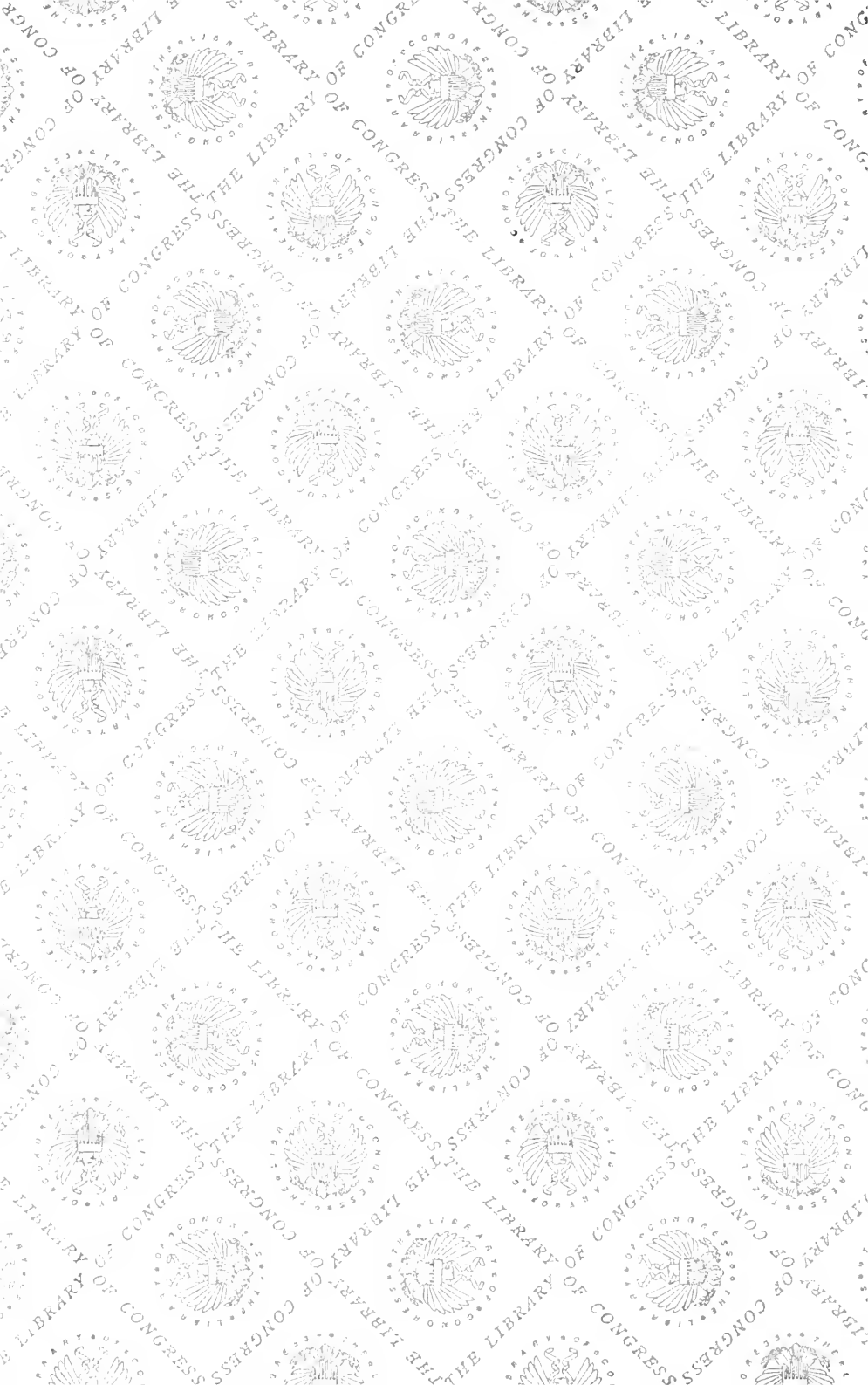


F 123

1077 06





THE

HOME OF COOPER

AND THE

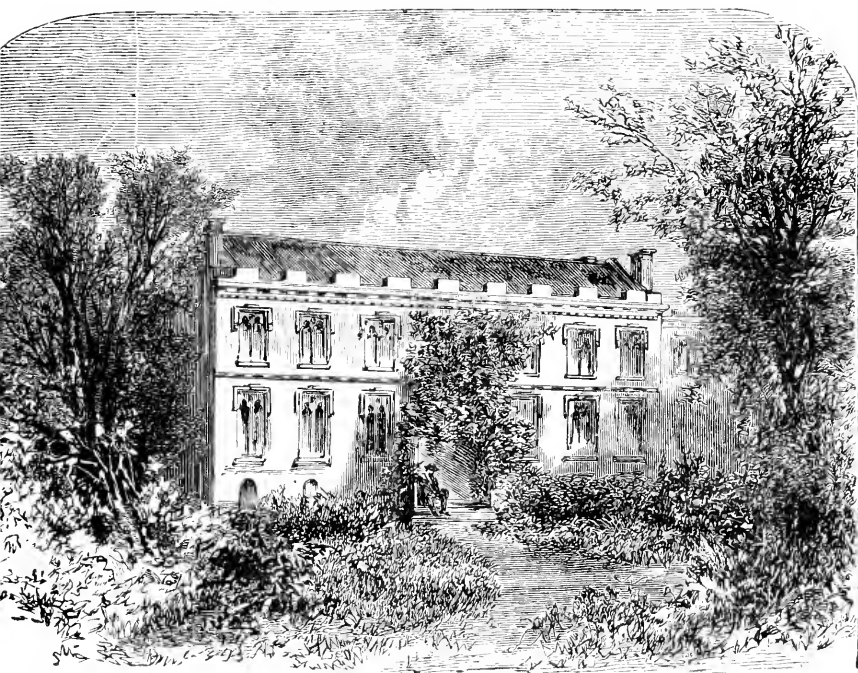
Haunts of Leatherstocking.

By BARRY GRAY.

ILLUSTRATED.



New York:
RUSSELL BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.
1873.



THE HALL.

The Home of FENIMORE COOPER, at Cooperstown.



and believe me dear Sir,
as ever yours very sincerely
J. Fennimore Cooper

THE

Home of Cooper

AND THE

Haunts of Leatherstocking.

BY BARRY GRAY.

NEW YORK:
RUSSELL BROTHERS, PUBLISHERS.

—
1872.

TO
HENRY FREDERICK PHINNEY,
OF
COOPERSTOWN,
THIS SKETCH OF
“THE HOME OF COOPER”
IS
INSCRIBED
BY THE WRITER.

F. 119
C 7726

COOPERSTOWN.

'TIS TWENTY YEARS SINCE.



ON a bright autumnal afternoon in the middle of September, close on to twenty-one years ago, the writer of this sketch was descending the winding road of a lofty hill, which overlooked a lovely lake and a peaceful village. Drawing rein, he gazed admiringly for a few moments on the scene before him. Below, like "a dimple on the face of earth," environed by hills, the sides of which were golden with ripening grain or shaded with leafy trees, lay a broad and placid sheet of water, which, spreading in a northerly direction, was finally lost to the eye amid the dark ever-greens that lined its shores. In width it varied from three quarters of a mile to one mile and a half. Numerous indentures in the land, forming graceful bays and inlets, broke the regularity of its outlines, and over the tops of the forest trees he had glimpses of the western bank, with its high, broken hills that appeared to creep gradually down to the water's edge. At the southern extremity of the lake nestled a small village, its white dwelling houses gleaming picturesquely through the green foliage, and with here and there a church spire pointing heavenward.

The hill was Mount Vision, the lake Otsego, and the village Cooperstown. The trees bordering the road along which his carriage rolled wore their darkest and richest

tinued to occupy some such place among the towns of New York State as is now filled by the villages and towns on the shores of the lakes of Westmoreland, in England, and by the several *bourgs* on those of the different waters of Switzerland."

Then, too, there were no boats, save those propelled by sails or oars, on the lake; while now there are two steamers which ply daily up and down its waters. Then, the only means whereby tourists could reach this lovely and sequestered spot were by stage coach or private conveyance over a long and sometimes dusty and tedious route; now, seated at their ease in drawing-room cars, they are carried by the power of steam swiftly along through the winding and picturesque valley of the Susquehanna. The village streets have lengthened and extended their arms south and west. Costly stores and elegant dwellings have risen on the sites of antiquated houses, and pretty cottages have sprung up where then grew only the wild rose and the brier.

COOPERSTOWN IN 1848.

Willis, who visited Cooperstown in the early summer of 1848, thus described it: "It looks like a town where everybody 'gets along,' where there are six or seven rather rich people, and no such thing as a pauper. The principal tavern looks a good deal fingered and leaned against; the 'hardware stores' are prosperously well built; the boys, playing in the street, draw grown-up audiences, whose pleased attention to the unvarying varlets shows that there is nothing better going on; and, in the windows of the houses on the side streets, sit young ladies without a sign of a shirt collar in their company, and this last bespeaks a town of exhausted uncertainties—everybody's ex-

act value ascertained, and no object in visiting except with definite errand or invitation. By glimpses that I caught, over rose trees and picket fences, I should say there was many a charming girl wasting her twilights in Cooperstown, while I saw no sign of the gender to match—nothing masculine stirring, except very little boys and very manifest ‘heads of families.’”

The steamboats and railroads, however, have greatly changed this state of affairs, and when the tide of summer travel is at its height, and the hospitable doors of the Cooper House are wide open, and the proprietors standing therein “welcome the coming, speed the parting guest,” Cooperstown wears quite another appearance. Its business men hasten with elastic tread through its streets, and no “charming girl” now “wastes her twilights” for lack of a “shirt collar” to keep her company. In fact, the impression one now receives of Cooperstown is, that it is a thriving business place, with a large majority of well-to-do citizens, who are actively striving to improve the town, and, by increasing its facilities of access, to render it attractive not only to summer tourists, but to such as having a competence would wish to retire from the turmoil and excitement of a city life. The streets are well paved and well lighted, and the town itself bears a cheerful, sunny aspect. Its scenery is comprised of mountains, valleys, streams and lakes. Lovely walks and drives, with excellent advantages for boating and fishing, unite in making it one of the most delightful of summer resorts.

It is the capital of Otsego County, and is about seventy miles west of Albany. It has a population of about two thousand inhabitants, and contains six churches, four banks, a Young Men’s Literary Association, with library and read-

ing room, a fine public school, two steamers—the “Natty Bumppo” and the “Mary Boden”—running to the head of the lake, and connecting, by stages, with Richfield and Sharon Springs. The Cooperstown and Susquehanna Valley Railroad, J. F. Scott, President, connects with the Albany and Susquehanna Railroad to Albany and Binghamton. Mr. George Talbot Olyphant is the Acting President of this road, and Mr. H. A. Fonda the General Superintendent.

EARLY HISTORY OF COOPERSTOWN.

Cooperstown was settled by Judge William Cooper, who removed from Burlington, New Jersey, with his family and domestics, numbering fifteen in all, in 1786. The youngest member of the party—an infant a year old—was destined, in after years, to make memorable the spot his father had selected wherein to set up his household gods. Their arrival is thus pleasantly told by Mr. G. Pomeroy Keese, a descendant of Judge Cooper's, in an illustrated article published in *Harper's Weekly*, July 29, 1871:

“One bright October afternoon eighty years ago, as the sun was drawing lengthened shadows over the landscape, bathing in rich autumnal light the hills which surround the limped waters of Otsego Lake, came around the base of ‘Mount Vision’ a lumbering family coach, bearing, with its attendant vehicles, the founder of Cooperstown and his household to their new home. All the glorious beauties of the changing foliage, which have since charmed so many thousands who have visited this still rural retreat, were in their virgin splendor; and as the new comers looked upon the scene, and beheld in the reflection of the lake below the dark shades of the evergreens contrasted with the gold and crimson hues of the maple and the beech,

they must have been sadly insensible to the chief attraction of their future abode if they failed to see in it one of the most perfect combinations of hill and valley, lake and forest, which the hand of painter could portray.



COOPERSTOWN, FROM THE EAST.

* * * With the fading sunlight our travelers passed along the western slope of Mount Vision, and, as they paused to take a view of the lake, they saw a deer come out of the forest and drink of its waters. Soon they crossed the Susquehanna at its source, the outlet of Otsego Lake, and entered the confines of the village named after its founder—Cooperstown. The whole population of the place—thirty-five in all—were drawn up to receive the 'lord of the manor,' who, from henceforth, as the first judge of the county and its largest lauded proprietor, became the leading spirit in all that region."

From "*The Chronicles of Cooperstown*," edited and chiefly written by FENIMORE COOPER, is taken this description of the village, as it was in 1838 :

"The village is beautifully placed at the southern end of the lake, being bounded on one side by its shores, and on another by its outlet—the Susquehanna. The banks of both these waters vary from twenty to forty-five feet in height. * * * The place is clean, the situation is dry, and altogether it is one of the healthiest residences in the State."

And, under a thin veil of fiction, as the village of Templeton, in "*Home as Found*," the novelist thus describes it, seen from Mount Vision :

"At the northern termination of this lovely valley, and immediately on the margin of the lake, lay the village of Templeton, immediately under the eyes of the party. The distance, in an air line, from their stand to the centre of the dwellings, could not be much less than a mile, but the air was so pure and the day so calm that it did not seem so far. The children and even the dogs were seen running about the streets, while the shrill cries of boys at their gambols ascended distinctly to the ear. * * *

"The appearance of Templeton, as seen from the height where it is now exhibited to the reader, was generally beautiful and map-like. There might be a dozen streets, principally crossing each other at right angles, though sufficiently relieved from this precise delineation to prevent a starched formality. Perhaps the greater part of the buildings were painted white, as is usual in the smaller American towns ; though a better taste was growing in the place, and many of the dwellings had the graver and

chaster hues of the grey stones of which they were built. A general air of neatness and comfort pervaded the place, it being as unlike a continental European town south of the Rhine, in this respect, as possible—if, indeed, we except the picturesque *bourgs* of Switzerland. In England, Templeton would be termed a small market town, so far as size was concerned; in France, a large *bourg*, while in America it was, in common parlance and legal appellation, styled a village.

“Of the dwellings of the place, fully twenty were of a quality that denoted ease in the condition of their occupants, and bespoke the habits of those accustomed to live in a manner superior to the *oipolloi* of the human race. Of these, some six or eight had small lawns, carriage sweeps, and other similar appliances of houses that were not deemed unworthy of the honor of bearing names of their own. No less than five little steeples, towers or belfries (for neither word is exactly suitable to the architectural prodigies we wish to describe) rose above the roofs, denoting the sites of the same number of places of worship; our American villages usually exhibiting as many of these proofs of liberty of conscience—caprices of conscience would, perhaps, be a better term—as dollars and cents will, by any process, render attainable. Several light carriages, such as were suitable to a mountainous country, were passing to and fro in the streets; and here and there a single horse vehicle was fastened before the door of a shop or a lawyer’s office, denoting the presence of some customer or client from among the adjacent hills.”

OTSEGO LAKE.

Of the many inland lakes which the State of New

York wears proudly on her bosom, none is more lovely, or has more romantic associations cast around it, than that of Otsego. It is on these waters and in their neighborhood that the varied scenes of the Leatherstocking Tales are laid, and there is scarcely a tree, a rock, a spring or a ruin in their vicinity that is not invested with a halo of romance and interest.

Thither in future years, as to an intellectual Mecca, pilgrims will come to do honor to the memory of Cooper, to verify his descriptions of natural scenery, and to testify to his truthful delineation of character. He, before any other writers of his day, did most to create a national literature, of which the country must always be proud. Well and truly did the poet, Halleck, write:

“COOPER, whose name is with his country’s woven,
First in her files, her PIONEER of mind—
A wanderer* now in other climes, has proven
His love for the young land he left behind;

“And throned her in the Senate-hall of nations,
Robed like the deluge rainbow, heaven-wrought;
Magnificent as his own mind’s creations,
And beautiful as its green world’s of thought.”

Mr. Cooper, in his account of Lake Otsego, described in *The Chronicles of Cooperstown*, says:

“It is a sheet of limpid water, extending, in a direction from N. N. East to S. S. West, about nine miles, and varying in width from about three-quarters of a mile to a mile and a half. It has many bays and points, and as the first are graceful and sweeping, and the last low and wooded, they contribute largely to its beauty. The water is cool and deep, and the fish are consequently

* Mr. Cooper was then in Europe.

firm and sweet. The two ends of the lake, without being shallow, deepen their water gradually, but there are places, on its eastern side in particular, where a large ship might float with her yards in the forest.

"The shores of the Otsego are generally high, though greatly varied. On the eastern side, extends a range of steep mountains, that varies in height from four to six hundred feet, and which is principally in forest, though here and there a farm relieves its acclivities. The road along this side of the lake is peculiarly pleasant, and traveled persons call it one of the most strikingly picturesque roads within their knowledge. The western shore of the lake is also high, though more cultivated. As the whole country possesses much wood, the farms, viewed across the water on this side of the lake, resemble English park scenery, and are singularly beautiful, even as seen from the village.

"Nothing is wanting but ruined castles and recollections to raise it to the level of the scenery of the Rhine, or, indeed, to that of the minor Swiss views."

In his "*Deer Slayer*" he gives a more poetic picture of the lake, and speaks of it as "a broad sheet of water so placid and limpid that it resembled a bed of the pure mountain atmosphere compressed into a setting of hills and woods."

And further on, he says: "On all sides, wherever the eye turned, nothing met it but the mirror-like surface of the lake, the placid view of heaven, and the dense setting of woods. So rich and fleecy were the outlines of the forest that scarce an opening could be seen, the whole visible earth, from the rounded mountain-top to the

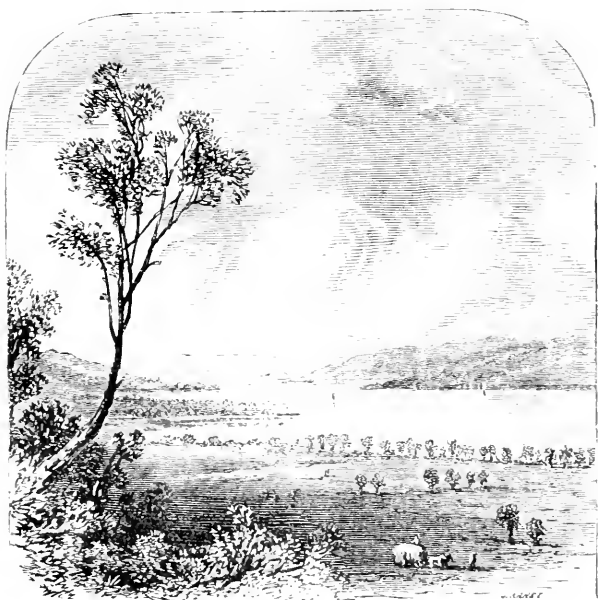
water's edge, presenting one unvaried hue of unbroken verdure. As if vegetation were not satisfied with a triumph so complete, the trees overhung the lake itself, shooting out towards the light, and there were miles along its eastern shore where a boat might have pulled beneath the branches of dark, Rembrandt-looking hemlocks, 'quivering aspens,' and melancholy pines. In a word, the hand of man had never defaced or deformed any part of this native scene, which lay bathed in the sunlight, a glorious picture of affluent forest grandeur, softened by the balminess of June, and relieved by the beautiful variety afforded by the presence of so broad an expanse of water."

No wonder that, while gazing on such a scene, Deer Slayer, as he stood leaning on his rifle, should have exclaimed: "This is grand!—'tis solemn!—'tis an edication of itself, to look upon!"—for one does not often come across a more vivid word-painting than this.

N. P. Willis thus records, in one of his rural letters, his first sight of Otsego Lake:

"Our first view was from woods high above it, and by glimpses through the trees which hem in a very sudden descent. An abrupt opening showed us an extremity of the lake immediately under us, and a town, apparently all villas and gardens, laid out upon a natural terrace of the bank. Away west stretched the calm plane of the Otsego, narrow like a river (and, indeed, of the average breadth of the Hudson, I should say); beautiful, uncommonly beautiful mountain shores shutting it in, and the slopes on the far side charmingly pictured with cultivation. A lake's mirror was never set in a prettier *encadrement* by the frame-making eddies of the retiring deluge,

and it is so situated, by the way, that its entire re-gilding, by the sunsets, is visible from every quarter of the town. The path of the eye from Cooperstown to the setting sun is up a nine mile mirror of wooded water; and, what with such a foreground, and the mists and reflections of its clear and placid bosom, they should see more of the 'dolphin glories' of the West than the inhabitants of other places. I forget, at this moment, whether Cooper's books are rich in descriptions of sunsets; but they might be, without drawing much on his imagination."



OTSEGO LAKE.

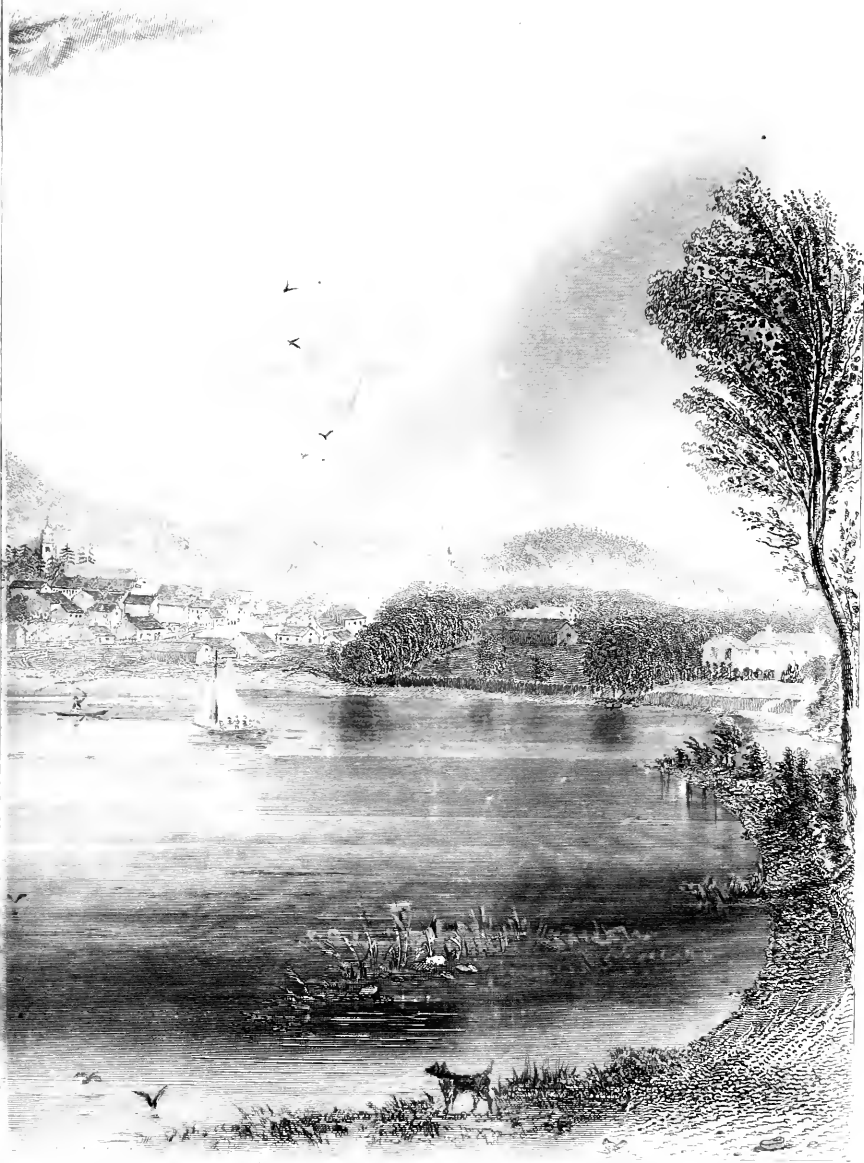
Near Cooper House, Cooperstown, N. Y.

Mr. Willis afterwards "got a beautiful view of the lake from the portico of a very fine house belonging to a married niece of Mr. Cooper, the edge of the water being

just over the garden paling, and the far away spread of the glassy plane, unshared by any visible dwelling, seeming to be a property of the grounds we were in. From hence, too, we saw a farm of Mr. Cooper's, two or three miles up the lake, on the northern shore. The sloping banks abound in 'capabilities' for country seats, and will, at some future day, doubtless, be hauled within suburban distance by the iron hook of a railroad, and gemmed with villas"—a prediction which recent years have seen verified.

Miss Susan Fenimore Cooper, the eldest daughter of the novelist, herself a writer of merit, and the author of several works, chiefly descriptive of rural life, prominent among which are "*Rural Hours*," published in 1850; "*Country Rambles: or, Journey of a Naturalist in England*," published in 1852; "*Rhyme and Reason of Country Life*," and "*Pages and Pictures*"—has given, in the first named work, a pleasing description of Lake Otsego. "Our own highland lake," she says, "can lay no claim to grandeur; it has no broad expanse, and the mountains about cannot boast of any great height, yet there is a harmony in the different parts of the picture which gives it much merit, and which must always excite a lively feeling of pleasure. The hills are a charming setting for the lake at their feet, neither so lofty as to belittle the sheet of water, nor so low as to be tame and commonplace; there is abundance of wood on their swelling ridges to give the charm of forest scenery, enough of tillage to add the varied interest of cultivation; the lake, with its clear, placid waters, lies gracefully beneath the mountains, flowing here into a quiet little bay, there skirting a wooded point, filling its ample basin, without encroaching on its banks by a rood of marsh or bog."





No book, we feel confident, has ever been published in this country containing such a store of information of a rural character so charmingly narrated, and at the same time embodying such positive facts, as Miss Cooper's "*Rural Hours*." It is written in a journal form, and shows the writer to be a close observer of nature in all her various moods. As a hand-book—not a guide-book—to the thoughtful minded who may visit Cooperstown it would prove a source of gratification.

We find much in it which we would like to quote, as appropriate to this sketch, but the limited space we have set ourselves will compel us to forego the gleanings therefrom of more than one or two additional paragraphs.

FISHING IN THE LAKE.

An attraction, which all true followers of old Isaac Walton will appreciate, is the superior fishing the lake affords. In it a fish, differing from all other known ones, is found. De Witt Clinton, in a correspondence with Mr. George Pomeroy, Mr. Cooper's brother-in-law, in 1822, in relation to this fish—called the Otsego bass—said that the fish was similar to the white fish of the Western lakes; but, subsequently, he acknowledged his error, and declared the fish to be a nondescript, unknown to any other waters. Agassiz, good authority in all such matters, says it is a different fish from any he had heretofore met, and Thad. Norris, of Philadelphia, author of "*The American Angler's Book*," and "*American Fish Culture*," speaks in this last named work, of the Otsego bass (*C. Otsego*). "This fish bears the very inappropriate name of 'bass' in Lake Otsego, while it does not bear the most remote affinity to any of the numerous

genera of bass. Thus far it is unknown in any other water than that which gives it its specific name. It is said even to surpass the larger white fish in excellence. Its average size is not much more than half that of *C. Albus*. It could likely be naturalized in small lakes of a more southern latitude than the large white fish, and is well worthy of the attention of those who take an interest in diffusing the best species."

Mr. Seth Green, noted for his success in the artificial breeding of fish, also recognizes the Otsego bass as being distinct from those living in other waters.

Miss Cooper, in her "*Rural Hours*," says: "We have one fish peculiar to this lake; at least the variety found here is very clearly marked, and differs from any yet discovered elsewhere. It is a shad salmon, but is commonly called the 'Otsego Bass,' and is considered one of the finest fresh water fish in the world. In former years they were so abundant that they were caught by the thousand in seines; on one occasion five thousand are said to have been taken; the people in the village scarcely knew what to do with them; some were salted, others thrown to the hogs. They are still drawn in the seine, being seldom taken by the hook, but their numbers, as might be supposed, have very much diminished. The largest bass known here have weighed seven pounds, but they do not often exceed three or four pounds at present. They have a very sweet, fine white meat, with a dark, gray skin." The destruction of fish in this lake, as in all lakes and streams where fishing is indiscriminately pursued, has, since Miss Cooper wrote the above—twenty years ago and more—been very great; so much so, indeed, as to threaten the total extermination of this

celebrated fish : but within a year or two, thanks to the efforts of the enterprising citizens of the village, the waters of the lake are now in a fair way to be fully replenished with not only the Otsego bass, but with many other varieties of fish. Under the personal superintendence of Mr. Seth Green, the process of artificial fish hatching has been successfully accomplished, and there is every prospect that within a very short time, as the following report, prepared by Mr. Elihu Phinney, chairman of the committee of the society organized for the propagation of fish, will show, Otsego Lake will swarm with several varieties of fish : " Out of eight thousand salmon trout spawn," writes Mr. Phinney, under date of February, 1872, " less than one hundred, all told, have been destroyed. Of the remainder, only two or three hundred remain unhatched, and the young fish are certainly objects of great curiosity. Each one is about half an inch in length, closely resembling a pair of black goggles, with a small but well filled carpet bag, or provision pouch attached, and a transparent streak of wiggling " blue light " in the rear, with which to steer the whole apparatus. They are extremely active, darting about with surprising velocity when disturbed, but hiding instantly, with instinctive shyness, in their gravel beds.

" Whilst with the salmon trout spawn, which bear rough usage, the mortality has been only about one per cent., amongst the bass eggs, which seem to be of an entirely different and far more sensitive structure, it has been vastly greater. A very careful record, however, of the daily losses, enables us to predict, with safety, that at the end of twenty days when the period of incuba-

tion ceases) there will remain alive, in the hatching boxes, at least four hundred and fifty thousand bass. Should one half, or even one third of this vast number of fish ever come to maturity, the citizens of Cooperstown, and indeed of the whole surrounding country, might well rejoice at the success of this experiment."

That the above named enterprise will contribute greatly to the future prosperity of the village there can be no question. The Hatching House is at Three Mile Point.

POINTS OF INTEREST.



LEATHERSTOCKING FALLS.

Near Cooperstown, N. Y.

Among the favorite points and objects of interest within walking distance of the Cooper House are Han-

nah's Hill, West Hill, Prospect Rock, Council Rock, Leatherstocking (or Bear Cliff) Falls, Leatherstocking's Cave, Three Mile Point, the Pirate's Spring, Lakewood Cemetery and Fairy Spring, the Homestead Grounds of the Cooper family, the "Jambs," Pappose Pool, and a few humble antiquities—a noted rock, the ruins of a bridge and the remains of a military work—all close together near the outlet of the lake.

THE ROCK.

"The Rock," says Miss Cooper, in her *"Rural Hours,"* "lies in the lake, a stone's throw from the shore; it is a smooth, rounded fragment, about four feet high; the waters sometimes, in very warm seasons leave it nearly dry, but they have never, I believe, overflowed it. There is nothing remarkable in the rock itself, though it is perhaps the largest of the few that show themselves above the surface of our lake; but this stone is said to have been a noted rallying point with the Indians, who were in the habit of appointing meetings between different parties at this spot. From the Mohawk country, from the Southern hunting grounds on the banks of the Susquehanna, and from the Oneida region, they came through the wilderness to this common rendezvous at the gray rock, near the outlet of the lake. Such is the tradition. * * * Its very simplicity gives it weight, and it is quite consistent with the habits of the Indians, and their nice observation; for the rock, though unimportant, is yet the largest in sight, and its position near the outlet would make it a very natural waymark to them.

THE REMAINS OF A BRIDGE.

"On the bank of the river," says the above named

writer, "are found the ruins of a bridge—the first made at this point by the white man. * * * In the summer of 1786 a couple of emigrants, father and son, arrived on the eastern bank of the river, intending to cross it; there was no village here then. A single log cabin and a deserted block house stood on the spot, however, and they hoped to find at least the shelter of walls and a roof. But there was no bridge over the river, nor boat to ferry them across; some persons, under such circumstances, would have forded the stream—others might have swam across; our emigrants took a shorter course—they made a bridge. Each carried his axe, as usual, and choosing one of the tall pines standing on the bank—one of the old race which then filled the whole valley—they soon felled the tree, giving it such an inclination as threw it across the channel, and their bridge was built. They crossed on the trunk."

PAPPOOSE POOL.

"About two miles from the village," writes Miss Cooper, "there is a very pretty pool in a field near the road, covering, perhaps, an acre or more of ground; marvellous tales were formerly told of its depth, and for a long time people tried to believe it was unfathomable; but, unfortunately, actual measurement has destroyed the illusion, and it is found to be only five or six feet in depth! All agree, however, that it has become much more shallow since the country has been opened and the woods cut away—

'Before these fields were shorn and tilled,
Full to the brim our rivers flowed,
The melody of waters filled
The fresh and boundless wood,
And torrents dashed, and rivulets played,
And fountains spouted in the shade.'

"But now, as the old Indian sings, these things are changed:

'The springs are silent in the sun,
The rivers by the blackened shore
With lessening current run.'

"This little lake—Pappoose Pool, as it is called—looks very prettily as one comes and goes along the highway, with its border of evergreens of various kinds sweeping half round it, and making a fine background to the water which they color with their dark branches."

MR. BRYANT'S ORATION.

In his Discourse on the Life, Genius and Writings of J. Fenimore Cooper, delivered by Mr. Wm. Cullen Bryant at the Metropolitan Hall, New York, February 25, 1852, at a public memorial meeting in honor of Mr. Cooper, the Hon. Daniel Webster presiding, Mr. Bryant, speaking of the author's home, said: "To this home Cooper, who was born in Burlington, in the year 1789, was conveyed in his infancy; and here, as he informs us in his preface to *The Pioneers*," his first impressions of the external world were obtained. Here he passed his childhood, with the vast forests around him, stretching up the mountains that overlook the lake, and far beyond, in a region where the Indian yet roamed, and the white hunter—half Indian in his dress and mode of life—sought his game; a region in which the bear and the wolf were yet hunted, and the panther, more formidable than either, lurked in the thickets, and tales of wanderings in the wilderness, and encounters with these fierce animals beguiled the length of the winter nights of this place. Cooper, although early removed from it to pursue his studies, was an occasional resident throughout his life, and here his last years were wholly passed."

The writer of the sketch descriptive of Cooper and

Otsego Hall, in "*Homes of American Authors*," says: "Mr. Cooper's time, after his return to the United States, was chiefly divided between New York, Philadelphia and Cooperstown, where he had repaired the fine old mansion which his father had erected, when the first hearth-stone was laid on the shores of the Otsego. Originally it stood alone, with the lake before its doors, and the forest, which he has described so beautifully in "*The Pioneers*," in full view on the right. But now the hamlet has grown to a village, and the village to a town, 'till the once almost solitary representative of civilization was surrounded by all the signs of a thriving and industrious population. Still, early associations and its own natural beauty bound him to the spot; and, to a mind like his, which looked upon the grave without fear, there must have been a deep pleasure, though a melancholy one, in the thought that his would lie amid the scenes which had suggested some of his most beautiful creations."

THE SUSQUEHANNA.

The Susquehanna river takes its rise in Otsego lake, at its southeastern boundary; and, after winding through forest defiles, across broad meadow lands, past rural hamlets and pretentious cities, for nearly four hundred miles in a southerly direction, finally rushes through the outstretched arms of Chesapeake bay into the welcome bosom of the Atlantic Ocean. With every foot of its course it increases in importance and historical interest, furnishing material alike to the poet, the orator and the novelist, from which to weave poems, speeches and romances. Campbell, in his "*Gertrude of Wyoming*," glorifies it, and opens his poem with—

On Susquehanna's side, fair Wyoming."

Willis's "*Letters from Under a Bridge*," written in a secluded glen of the valley of the Susquehanna, are replete with praises of this stream, which he declares "sweeps on its course with the disdain of a beauty used to conquer;" and again he speaks of it in his "*Rural Letters*," in connection with Mr. Cooper, to see whom he had driven across from Sharon Springs to Cooperstown: "I found," he wrote, "Mr. Cooper at home, and as there was still a remainder of daylight, he put on his hat at my request to show me the source of the Susquehanna. Whether the river should have presented the stranger to Mr. Cooper, or Mr. Cooper presented me to the river—which was the monarch and which the goldstick in waiting—is a question of precedence that occurred to me. It was something to see two such sources together—the pourings out from both fountains, from visible head and visible head-waters, sure to last famous till doomsday; and with appreciative homage I mentally followed the viewless afterflow of both. Mr. Cooper, meantime, was as unpretending as any other man, and the Susquehanna flowed away, like water you can see the whole of."

And Mr. Seward, in an address delivered on the occasion of the centennial celebration of the settlement of Cherry Valley, July 4th, 1840, said: "I have desired to see for myself the valleys of Otsego, through which the Susquehanna extends his arms and entwines his fingers with the tributaries of the Mohawk, as if to divert that gentle river from its allegiance to the Hudson."

Mr. Cooper himself, in the introduction to "*The Pioneers*," records an interesting historical incident, which occurred during the Revolutionary war, in connection with the "outlet" of the Susquehanna. In 1779, an expedition,

commanded by Gen. James Clinton, the father of De Witt Clinton, was sent against the hostile Indians, who dwelt about a hundred miles west of Otsego, on the banks of the Cayuga. On reaching the foot of Otsego lake, the troops encamped on the shore. "The Susquehanna," says Mr. Cooper, "a narrow though rapid stream at its source, was much filled with 'flood-wood,' or fallen trees; and the troops adopted a novel expedient to facilitate their passage. The Otsego is about nine miles in length, varying in breadth from half a mile to a mile and a half. The water is of great depth, limpid, and supplied from a thousand springs. At its foot the banks are rather less than thirty feet high, the remainder of its margin being in mountains, intervals and points. The outlet, or the Susquehanna, flows through a gorge in the low banks just mentioned, which may have a width of two hundred feet. This gorge was dammed, and the waters of the lake collected: the Susquehanna was converted into a rill. When all was ready, the troops embarked, the dam was knocked away, the Otsego poured out its torrent, and the boats went merrily down with the current."

Miss Cooper, in her "*Rural Hours*," also speaks of this military dam in an early chapter of that work.

Mr. Cooper describes this outlet as "a narrow current" which "rushed impetuously from the bosom" of the lake, and "was to be traced for miles, as it wound its way towards the south through the real valley, by its borders of hemlock and pine, and by the vapor which arose from its warmer surface into the chill atmosphere of the hills. The banks of this lovely basin, at its outlet or southern end, were steep but not high; and in that direction the land continued, far as the eye could reach, a narrow but grace-

ful valley, along which the settlers had scattered their humble habitations, with a profusion that bespoke the quality of the soil and the comparative facilities of intercourse”

Miss Constance Fenimore Woolson, of Cleveland, Ohio, author of an interesting sketch entitled “*The Haunted Lake*,” published in the December (1871) number of *Harper's Monthly Magazine*, thus speaks of this interesting stream :

“At the foot of Mount Vision a little river leaves the lake, and steals away under shady banks, gently and unobtrusively rippling along between the broad meadows, and gradually gathering strength from every hillside brook as it rolls onward towards the south, through the rich farm lands, by crowded cities, over the boundary lines of great States, and across the feet of cloud-capped mountains, until, its journey ended, the mighty Susquehanna, born in the Haunted Lake, five hundred miles away, meets the salt water where the ocean thrusts up into the land the long arm of Chesapeake Bay. But, although the river flows through a succession of lovely valleys, there is in all its course no scene so charming as its source—‘Susquehanna's utmost spring,’ as the old song has it.”

That Miss Woolson wrote with a full knowledge of her subject, and *con amore*, no one who has read her agreeable article will fail to perceive. Of

COOPER'S MONUMENT

she says :

“On one of the slopes of Mount Vision, just beyond the site of the panther scene in ‘*The Pioneers*,’ stands the Cooper Monument, in the grounds of the new cemetery. It is of Italian marble, twenty-five feet high, with a figure of

Leatherstocking, four and a half feet high, on the summit. Natty is represented loading his rifle and gazing off on the Glimmerglass spread out beneath him, while the hound by his side, watching his master with eager eyes, betrays the accomplished hand of Launitz in his life-like fidelity : alas, that the hand has grown cold ! The die is carved with symbols in alto-relievo : on one side is the name of Fenimore Cooper, surrounded by palm and oak branches ; and on the opposite face is seen the student's lamp and ink-stand, with the pen borne aloft by an eagle. On the north side are the naval emblems—an anchor with crossed oars, spyglass and commander's sword ; and on the south the Indian devices—bow and quiver of arrows, scalp-locks on a lance, tomahawk, and necklace of bears' claws. Much has been said as to the propriety of placing Cooper's monument on any other site than Cooper's grave—especially when so short a distance separates them ; and truly the natural place would seem to be the spot where the author's body lies. But when we inspect the marble column, with Natty standing on its summit, our thoughts turn first to the honest-hearted old hunter, who is as much a friend as though he really lived and died in the flesh, and it seems right that some memorial to his memory should stand on the hillside where he roamed, overlooking the lake which he loved. Let Natty, therefore, have the marble column, and let Cooper sleep with his kindred in the old churchyard, needing no sculptured monument to mark the pathway to his grave, deeply worn by hundreds of pilgrim feet year after year."

At the centennial celebration of the birth of Sir Walter Scott, August 15th, 1871, an address was delivered by the Hon. W. W. Campbell, of Cherry Valley, before the Caledo-

nian Society of Otsego county, at Three Mile Point, on the Lake. Judge Campbell, in the course of his address, said:

"As we gather here to-day, to celebrate the centennial birthday of the great Scottish poet and novelist, we may forget that we are at the home and the birthplace of the great American novelist, Cooper, whose monument looks down on the clear waters of this beautiful lake, rendered classic by his pen."

HISTORIC ASSOCIATIONS.

In 1783 Washington wrote a friend that he had "visited the eastern branch of the Susquehanna, and viewed the Lake Otsego." Mr. Cooper, in "*The Chronicles of Coopers-town*," quotes the first number of the *Otsego Herald* (April, 1795) that "Otsego was originally the name of the lake from which the town and county were named; and that the term, among the aborigines, signified a place of rendezvous and of friendly greeting." Others say it signified "The Beautiful Water."

The second newspaper ever published west of Albany—the *Otsego Herald*—was commenced here by Elihu Phinney in 1795. Its files are still preserved by his descendants residing here.

Otsego Lake, the present village site, and the Susquehanna river, were the scenes of interesting events during the revolutionary war, when Major-General Sullivan sent General Clinton, with a brigade of twelve hundred men, against the Indians. The incidents of that expedition we have already recorded. It is commemorated by a new drive near the river bank, south of the village, called the "Sullivan road." Traces of the old Continental road, then cut from the Mohawk to Otsego Lake, are still visible.

Prince Talleyrand, the great French Minister of State, visited Judge Cooper in 1795, when an acrostic in French, on Miss Cooper, appeared in the *Otsego Herald*, attributed to the pen of the great diplomat.

Here Samuel F. B. Morse, then a young painter, spent a part of his youthful days, and amid these picturesque scenes cultivated the tastes which made him, later, President of the National Academy of Design, before he had become still more distinguished as the Inventor of the Telegraph.

Of Prof. Morse and Mr. Cooper, N. P. Willis, in his "*Pencillings by the Way*," thus wrote, after encountering them in the gardens of the Tuilleries at Paris: "And there come two of our countrymen, who are to be seen constantly together—Cooper and Morse. That is Cooper with the blue surtout buttoned up to his throat, and his hat over his eyes. What a contrast between the faces of the two men! Morse, with his kind, open, gentle countenance, the very picture of goodness and sincerity; and Cooper, dark and corsair looking, with his brows down over his eyes, and his strongly lined mouth fixed in an expression of moodiness and reserve. The two faces, however, are not equally just to their owners—Morse is all that he looks to be, but Cooper's features do him decided injustice. I take a pride in the reputation this distinguished countryman of ours has for humanity and generous sympathy. The distress of the refugee liberals from all countries comes home especially to Americans, and the untiring liberality of Mr. Cooper, particularly, is a fact of common admission and praise. It is pleasant to be able to say such things."

THE CHALET.

"Otsego Hall," the old Cooper homestead, has passed away, but the farm house which Mr. Cooper built at "The Chalet"—a tract of land of about one hundred acres, lying on the eastern bank of the lake, about one mile and a half above the village—is still pointed out to visitors. "This farm," says Mr. G. Pomeroy Keese, "was his daily resort for relaxation and enjoyment after his literary labors were over. It commanded an extensive view of the village and the valley of the Susquehanna on the south, and of the hills and country beyond the head of the lake on the north. It was this view, one of the most beautiful in the vicinity, that caused the purchase of the farm by Mr. Cooper. Its attractions to the agriculturist were not commensurate with the beauty of the situation. Indeed, a more forbidding spot, as far as the labors of the husbandman were considered, could not well have been chosen. The whole farm is, in fact, a miniature mountain, rising abruptly from the shore of the lake to the height of about four hundred feet; and, with the exception of two or three level terraces of a few acres each, an unbroken hillside, dotted with stumps, intersected by rocky ledges, and crowned by a wooded crest. To a farmer seeking a pecuniary return for his investment, this spot would surely have been passed over; but for Cooper, who delighted in overcoming difficulties, and who attacked with vigor any opposing obstacle, this was just the place."

OTHER INTERESTING POINTS.

Three miles from the village, on the west side of the lake, is Wild Rose Point. Here, on green lawns and beside cool springs and winding brooks, under the shade of venerable

oaks, parties of citizens and visitors are almost constantly found engaged in every kind of rural enjoyment. A mile nearer the village is Brookwood Point, now a summer residence, in a majestic grove effectively developed by tasteful improvement. The large farm of Judge Nelson (Senior Justice of the U. S. Supreme Court), lies between this and the village, and, like the adjoining lands, abounds in charming views.

On the east side, commencing at the Susquehanna, the spacious lawns and groves of "Lakelands" and the Bowers Farm and woods extend northward on the lake for a mile, with an attractive landing for Lakewood Cemetery; then the varied shores of mingled lawn, forest, cliff and ravine of "The Chalet," with a landing for Leatherstocking's cave. Two miles from the village is Point Judith, with its extensive lake prospects, its natural grove and tangled wild-wood, in their primitive luxuriance. A portion of the lake shore above this slopes in gentle lawns to the water, while in most places bold banks, dark wooded recesses and precipitous rocks form a foreground; east of which are found terraces fringed with forest and grove, bounded by steep hills, and commanding those charming views of the lake, its varied western shores and farms, and of the village whose beauties Mr. Cooper has described in the pages of his novels. Indeed, the author has left us but few of the salient points of attraction in the scenery of the lake and its surroundings to describe, that he has not done better than our poor pen could hope to accomplish. He has gone from among us, to be sure. "But," as Miss Woolson writes, "the magic of his genius lingers around the lake he so lovingly described. Its points and bays are haunted, and its forests are peopled with wraiths and shades. A listener

under the trees on a dreamy summer day will hear the low, musical laugh of Wah-ta-wah, the gentle Indian maiden, and catch a glimpse of the young chieftain, her lover, in the distance through the forest arches. Sometimes, at dusk, the camp fires of the Iroquois gleam from the gravelly points of the eastern shore; and off Hyde bay, where the rushes wave on the shoal, the dim outline of Muskrat Castle can be traced; and the faint strains of an old-time hymn are heard strangely sweet over the water—the even song of innocent Hetty at her mother's grave. On a moonlight night the solitary oarsman is startled by the flapping of unseen canvas; and, silently appearing from the realms of nowhere, the ark glides slowly into view, old Hutter at the helm, and the gigantic form of Harry Hurry lounging in the doorway. Attempt to approach the spirit bark and it vanishes in the haze, with a stentorian laugh from Harry Hurry ringing over the water, and echoed back and forth from mountain to mountain, until the whole group around the Haunted Lake seem nodding and shaking their sides in weird merriment.

“But, dearer than all in his gentle simplicity, honest hearted Natty, the greatest creation of Cooper's pen, haunts the lake and woods around, hunting the deer with dog and gun, the kindest spirit of the band. Sometimes, as the Deer Slayer, he is seen near the Fairy Spring, his grave, youthful face unmoved by the beauty of Judith Hutter, that alluring Lady of the Lake, whose dark eyes fascinate us even from the written page, and make us wonder at the severity of this forest Galahad. Then, as Leatherstocking, the mighty hunter, advanced in years, but honest hearted still, he is sometimes visible coming down from the cave that bears his name, gliding in his canoe across Blackbird

bay, or crossing the Vision in haste to rescue from the panther's cruel claws the fair form of Elizabeth Temple. The distant prairie, where the Leatherstocking finally disappears from our sight, is torn up by the steam plow and locomotive; the old trapper, with his white hairs and trembling steps, has returned to the Haunted Lake; and at early dawn his bowed figure appears at rare intervals standing on Otsego Rock, shading his eyes from the rising sun, and gazing over the Glimmerglass, the scene of his youthful exploits, with earnest interest. Dear old Natty—faithful, kindly wraith—the memory of thy character and deeds will haunt the valley long after the very names of its real men and women are forgotten—save only the name of the man who gave thee to the world, the man whose grave is fitly made near the shores of the Haunted Lake.

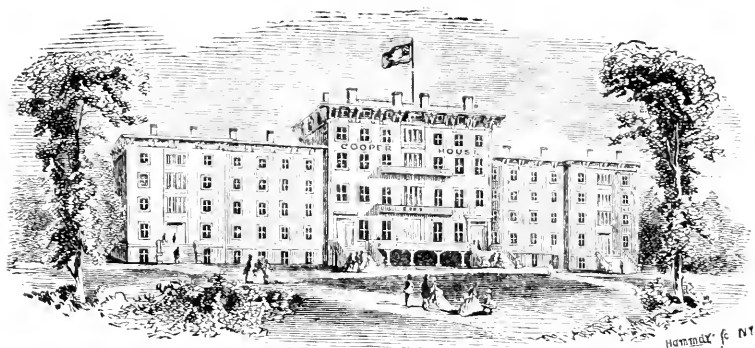
“O, Haunted Lake, from out whose silver fountains
The mighty Susquehanna takes its rise;
O, Haunted Lake, among the pine-clad mountains,
Forever smiling upward to the skies—

“Thrice blest art thou in every curling wavelet,
In every floating water lily sweet—
From the old Lion at thy northern boundary,
To fair Mount Vision sleeping at thy feet.

“A master's hand hath painted all thy beauties;
A master's mind hath peopled all thy shore
With wraiths of mighty hunters and fair maidens,
Haunting thy forest glades forevermore.

“A master's heart hath gilded all thy valley
With golden splendor from a loving breast;
And in thy little churchyard, 'neath the pine trees,
A master's body sleeps in quiet rest.

“O, Haunted Lake, guard well thy sacred story—
Guard well the memory of that honored name!
Guard well the grave that gives thee all thy glory
And raises thee to long enduring fame.”



THE COOPER HOUSE.

The Cooper House stands on the highest ground in the village—80 feet above the Lake and 1,200 feet above the sea. It is surrounded by a fine Park of nearly eight acres, handsomely planted with shade trees; and within the enclosure are Croquet, Ball and Archery Grounds. An ornamental Summer House, a Rustic Arbor and several tasteful Tents give a pleasing and picturesque appearance to the general surroundings.

SEASON OPENS IN JUNE.

The House will open during June of each year. It is capable of accommodating over three hundred guests. Its internal arrangements are complete, with all the modern improvements—including bells, gas in every room, hot and cold baths, etc. The rooms are mostly en suite, and well adapted for families. There are six stairways to each floor, rendering it perfectly safe in case of fire. It has a large Drawing Room for ladies, and spacious Halls for promenading. There are also

several cottages, suitable for families, within a hundred feet of the main building.

MUSIC.

Particular attention has been given to the selection of a first class orchestra, which will perform during the day, and in the evening for dancing. Regular Hops in the large Ball Room during the season.

There is a new and spacious building on the premises, erected in 1871, containing a fine large Billiard Room and four good Bowling Alleys.

LAUNDRY.

A new steam Laundry, complete in all its appointments, and under the direction of an accomplished Laundress, offers unusual facilities in that department.

Washing will be done in a superior manner, and with promptness and despatch. Particular attention given to Ladies' Dresses, Laces, etc.

STABLING.

A fine large Barn, with Stabling accommodations for over 50 horses, was erected in the spring of 1871. The stalls are all well ventilated, and the best attention to private horses and carriages will be guaranteed.

Guests wishing carriages or saddle horses can be supplied at short notice on application at the office.

An omnibus will be run to the Lake and other places of interest several times a day, for the convenience of the guests, at a very small charge.

CHURCHES.

The following Churches are represented, which guests of the Cooper House are cordially invited to attend:

Episcopal, Presbyterian, Methodist, Baptist, Universalist and Roman Catholic.

The Young Men's Library Association also offer special inducements to summer guests, giving them the full privileges of the Library and Reading Room at a greatly reduced rate.

TELEGRAPH.

The Western Union Telegraph Co. have an office in the Cooper House, communicating with all parts of the world.

There is also a News Stand, containing the best daily and weekly papers and magazines. Albany papers received at noon, and New York morning dailies received the same evening.

Eminent Physicians and Surgeons reside near the house, and can be summoned at short notice.

The proprietors refer with pleasure to their patrons of last year, as to their ability to keep a first class Resort, for the variety of their menu, the excellence of their cuisine, and the general attention to the comforts and wants of their guests.

IMPROVEMENTS.

During the Spring of 1872 they have enlarged their Dining Room one third, added a Gentlemen's Smoking Room, a Writing Room, and two pleasant Public Rooms for the Ladies, besides additional Sleeping Apartments.

RATES OF BOARD.

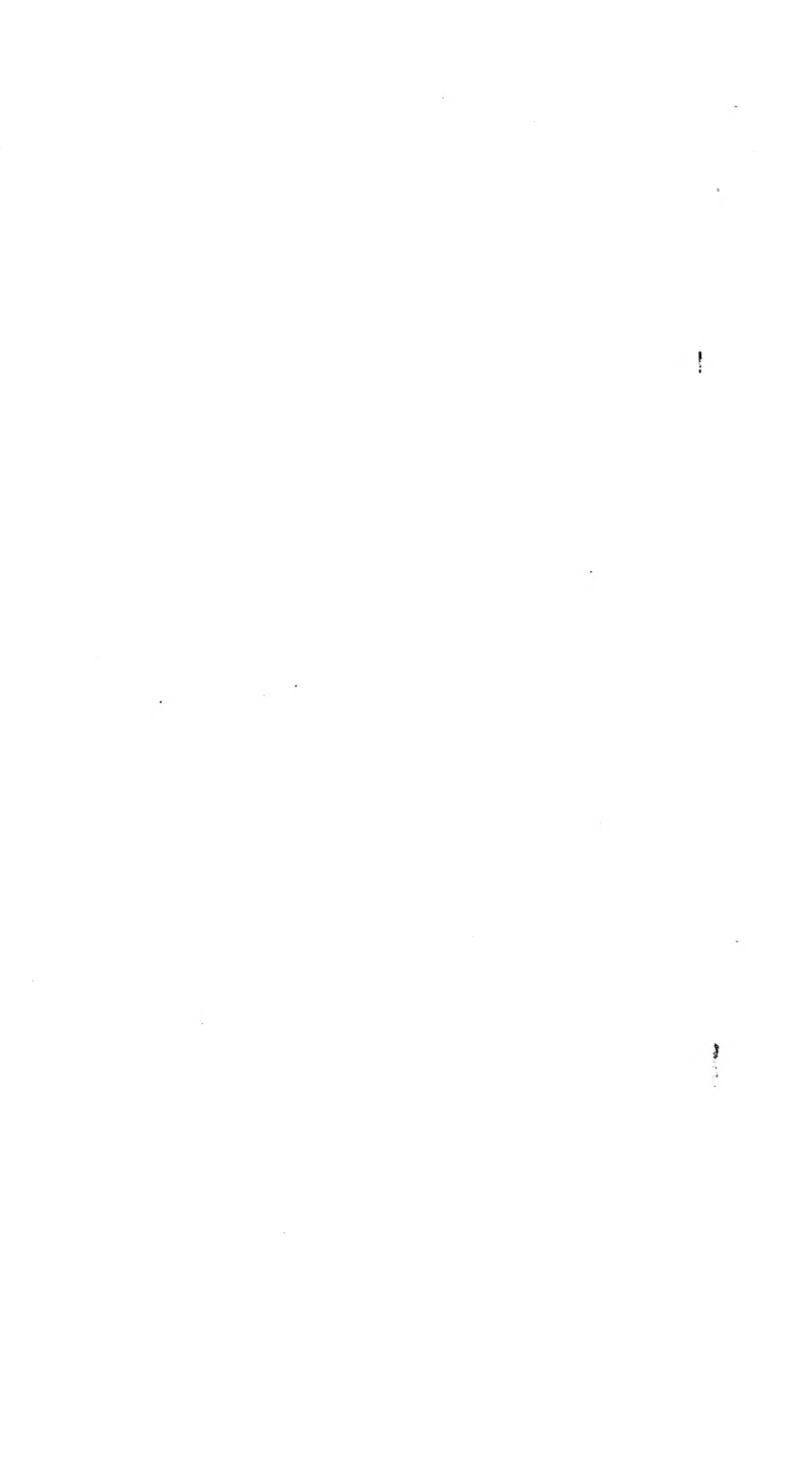
Board, transient, \$4 per day; during June, from \$15 to \$20 per week; during July, from \$20 to \$25; during August, \$25 per week, and in September from \$15 to \$20, according to size and location of rooms.

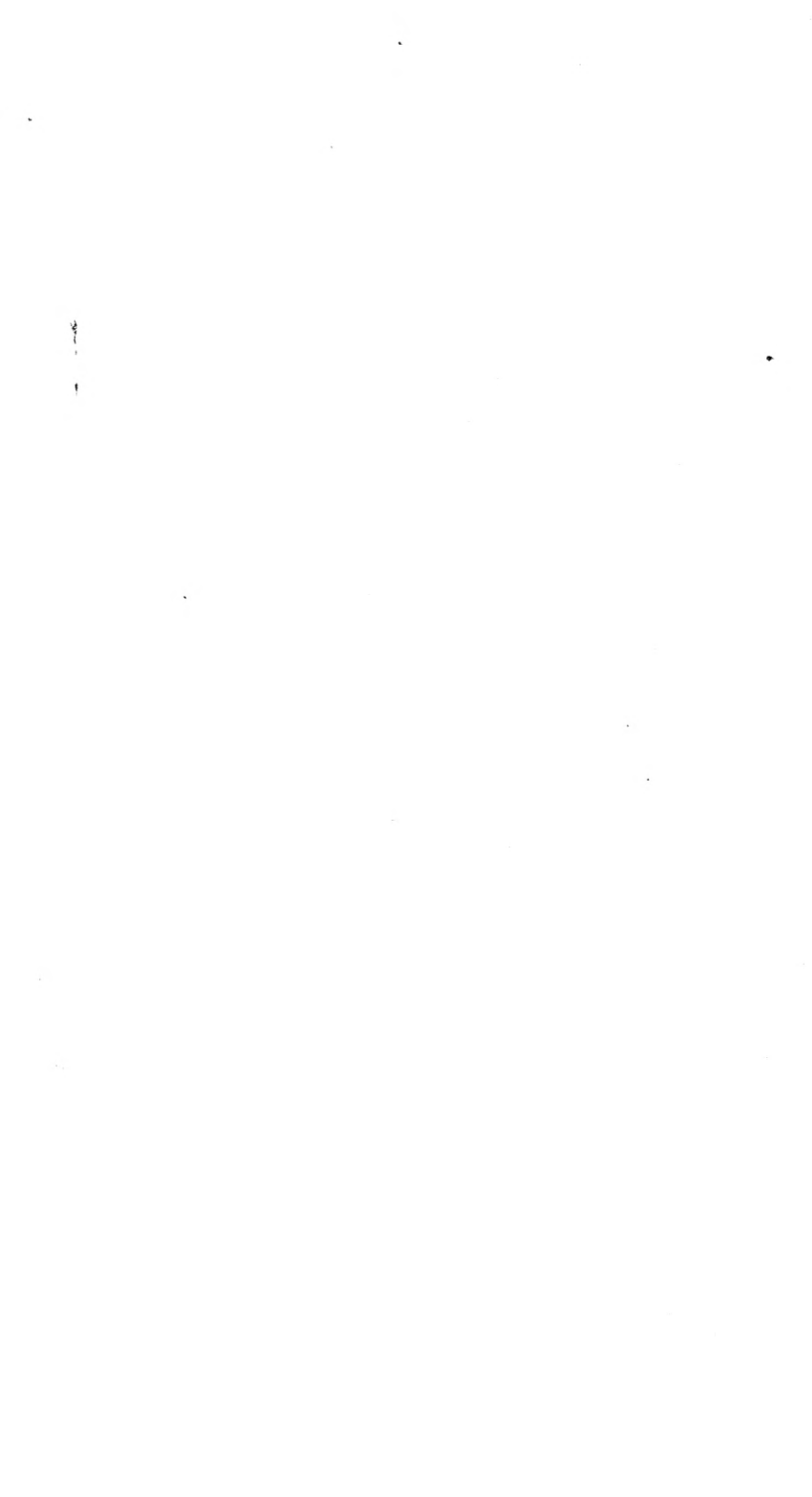
Children, under 12 years of age, and servants, half price.

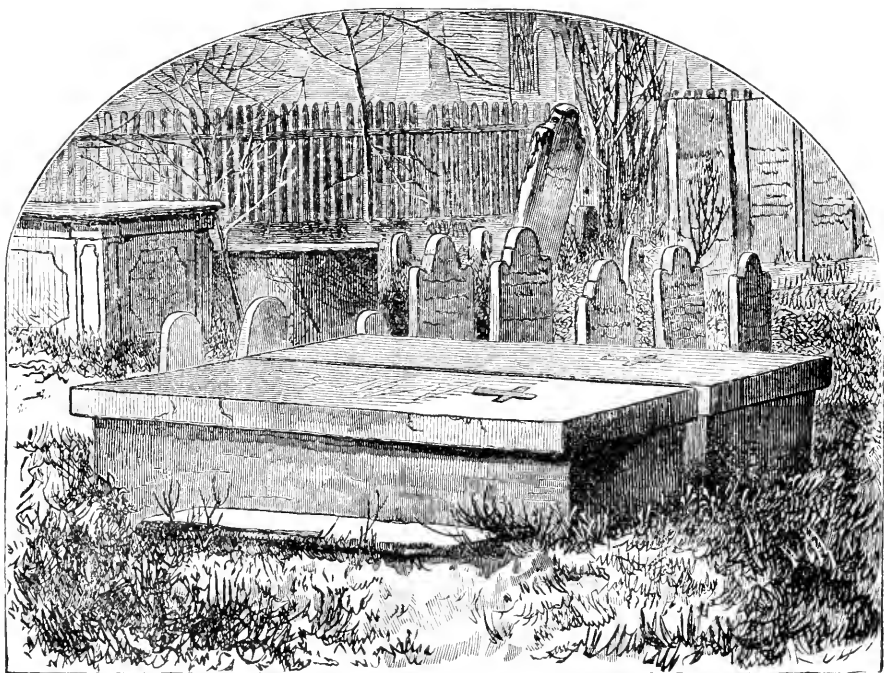
Special rates for families remaining through the season.

Application for Board and Rooms may be made to the Proprietors at Cooperstown, N. Y., or to W. B. Coleman, at the New York Hotel, N. Y. (721 Broadway), before the 1st of June, where plans of the House can be seen and rooms secured.

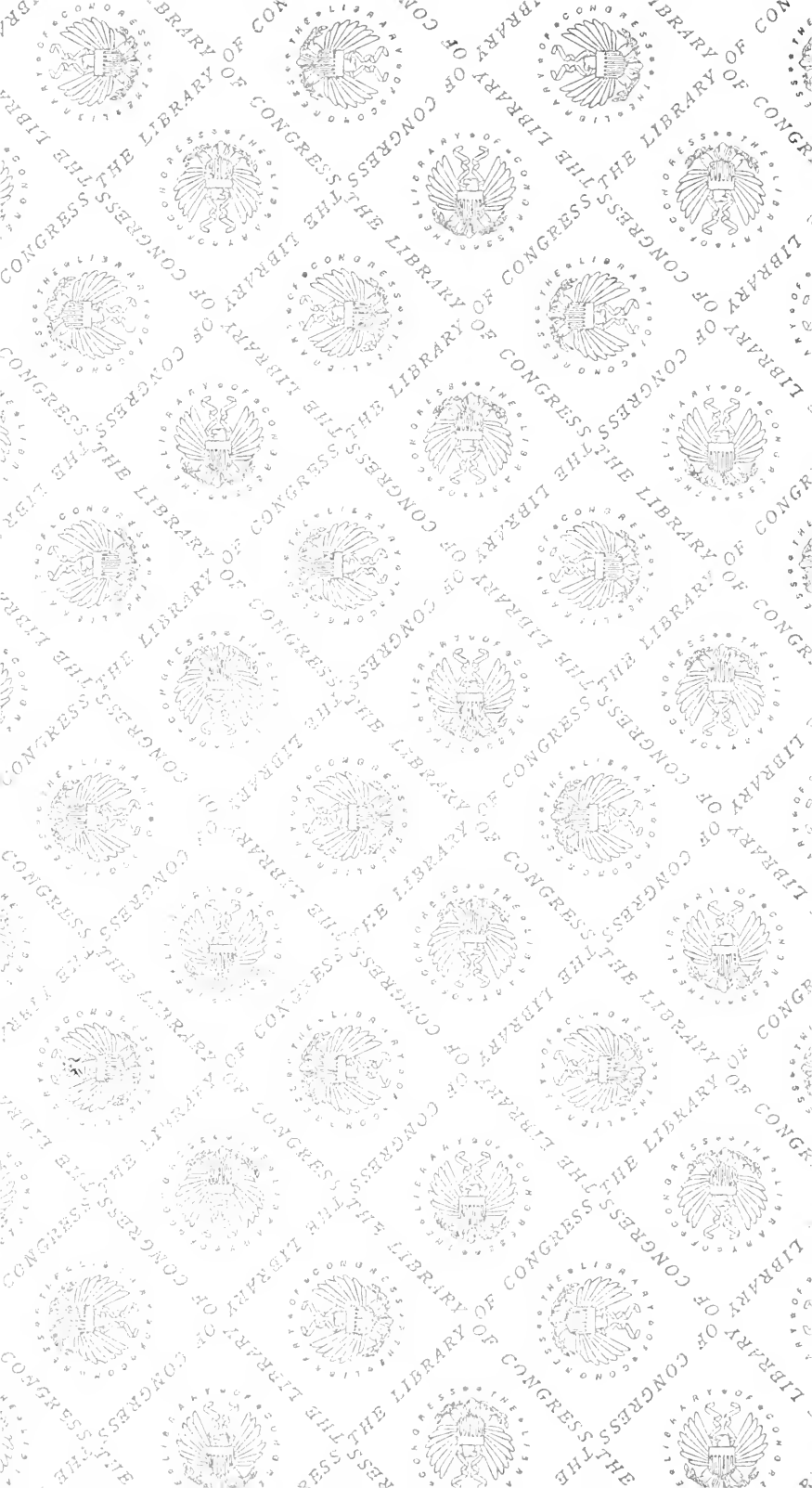
COLEMAN & MAXWELL.







THE TOMB OF FENIMORE COOPER,
At Cooperstown.



JUL 77



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 222 399 5